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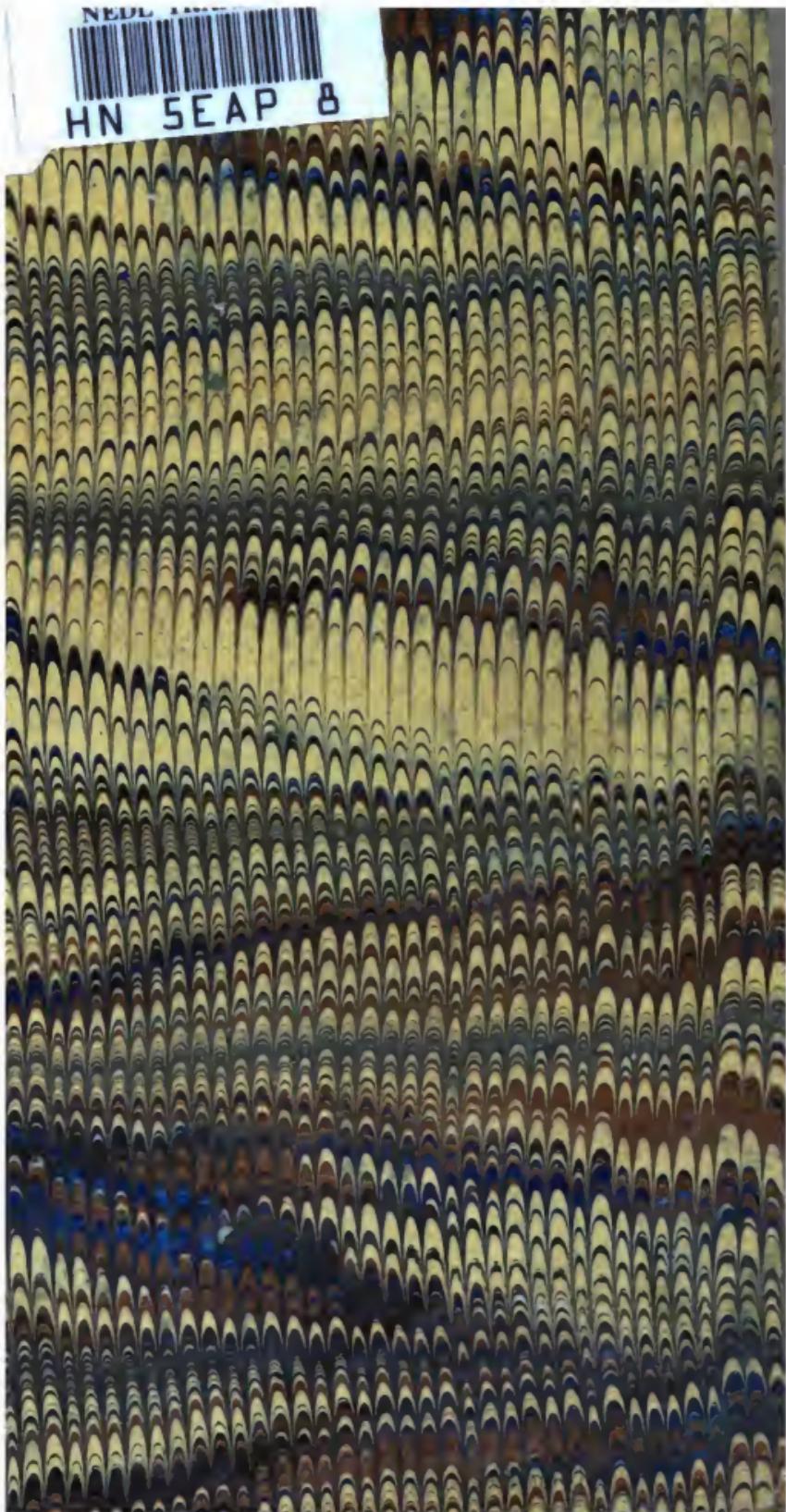
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THE GIFT OF
SINCLAIR KENNEDY

CLASS OF 1897

REUBEN RAMSAY:

OR,

THE BOY THAT NOBODY WANTED.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

TWO POETIC DIALOGUES.

BY MRS. MAXWELL.

EDITED BY DANIEL P. KIDDER.

New-York:

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PREFACE.

ALL children know, or *should* know, that soap and water are the best things for dirty faces and hands. It is doubtless one of the designs of Providence, in sending beautiful clear water all over this green earth, that we should keep our houses and persons clean; and if, as many astronomers affirm, there is no water in the moon, it is very evident that there are no children there, otherwise such a provision for dirty

faces and hands would not have been overlooked. But it is not of these particularly that this little book will treat. Children who have been rightly taught, understand the sad truth, that the heart cannot be cleansed as we cleanse the hands. Yet the heart is defiled, and must be made clean before we can mingle with the good on earth, and the pure in heaven. How can it be done? Read this book, little children. We hope that it may teach you the way.

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REUBEN RAMSAY.

CHAPTER I.

Reuben Ramsay—Grandfather—The looking-glass—
The unhappy boy—The lady—Helen—Frank and
baby—Reuben not wanted—The new friend.

REUBEN RAMSAY came into the house one day, roaring with all his might. It was no uncommon thing to see Reuben in this condition; so nobody became greatly concerned to find out the matter. This is always very provoking to young gentlemen who undertake to make a great noise in the world, and so it proved to Reuben Ramsay. The more folks would not hear, the louder he roared, until

his grandfather dropped his newspaper, and exclaimed,—

“What now, what now, my boy!”

“They—they—they don’t want me,” cried Reuben.

“Who don’t want you?” said grandfather, looking at him through his glasses.

“The boys!” screamed Reuben: “they won’t let me play; they call me a cross little rascal, and tell me to go home.”

“Not much out of the way either,” murmured grandfather, as he took up his paper again. “Nobody’s to blame for not wanting you. Go look into the glass, boy, and see if you want yourself.”

“Want myself!” thought Reuben, as he stopped crying, and sat down; “that is queer. What if I don’t,

how is it to be helped? I can't say, as the boys do, 'There is that cross Reuben Ramsay: nobody wants you, Reuben; so you had better be off home.' And yet I don't know but I would say so, if it would do any good. I will look in the glass, and see if I want myself."

So Reuben posted into the keeping room, where there was a long mirror, in which he could see himself from top to toe. What a sight was here! A face covered with all manner of dark lines, made of tears which had been turned out of their course by dirty hands; eyes that were dark and clear enough when they were made, but which now looked like two radishes in a glass of muddy water; a nose that might have gone for another radish, only

it was rubbed and pinched out of all shape; and a mouth that looked as though it had never opened, except to scream. Added to this was hair standing on end, torn jacket, and muddy trowsers. Reuben looked at this ugly fellow in the glass, and did not wonder that he was not wanted.*

“I’m sure,” thought he, “be it Reuben Ramsay or not, *I* don’t want him.” But then the thought came back to him again, “It can’t be helped, that is myself; it will do no good to say, ‘Go away, you cross little rascal:’ it won’t go.”

So Reuben sat down upon a chair, and covered his face with his dirty hands, and cried as though his heart would break. He did not roar and

* See frontispiece.

scream; but he sobbed and sobbed, until his heart came swelling up, and he was well nigh choked.

Now it happened that a lady had been for several days visiting Reuben's mother. This lady was very fond of good children; but, somehow, she had never happened to find out that a little care, and sympathy, and patience, sometimes makes naughty children good: if she had known it, no doubt she would have tried, for she was a good-hearted lady, who loved to see people happy, and she had sense enough to know that nobody *can* be happy without they are good. Well, as I have before told you, she had not found out, as yet, that she could do much toward making really bad children good. But we are happy

to tell you that Reuben Ramsay, naughty as he was, taught her this useful lesson. The lady had been acquainted with Reuben's mother for a good many years, but had never seen her since she had become the mother of little children. The lady thought Frank Ramsay a fine boy, she loved him dearly, almost at the first sight; and Helen, dear little Helen; and the baby, the crowing, good-natured baby. "I am sure," the lady would say, "I could love them no better if they were my own."

Mrs. Ramsay knew that she said nothing about Reuben, but she did not blame her; nobody but herself made any pretensions to loving him: even Frank and Helen, though they did not call him harsh names, always

the looking-glass, had he made the curious discovery that *he did not want himself!*

The little boy was still upon the sofa, crying as though all was lost, when the lady visitor entered the room. Her only object in coming in was to get a book, which she had left there the night before. "That child is for ever crying," thought she, as she took the book, and turned toward the door; but, as she did so, Reuben's sobs (for he did not see her) smote upon her heart. She had never spoken to him, and could not remember his name; but she walked up to the sofa, and said, kindly, "What is the matter, little boy?"

At any other time Reuben would have turned angrily away; but now

he was completely overcome by the vision of the glass: "Nobody wants me," sobbed Reuben; "and—and I don't want myself."

"Not want yourself!" said the lady; "why?"

"Because—because, ma'am, I have seen myself in the looking-glass. I am a bad-looking fellow, and I don't want myself."

The lady looked at Reuben, and did not much wonder; though she could hardly help smiling at the idea. She knew, however, that it is a very important step toward getting a *new* self, that of being tired of our *old* self; so she said seriously, but kindly, to Reuben, "Would you like to go and wash your face and hands, and brush your hair all nicely, and then come and talk with me?"

“ Do you *want* me ?” said Reuben, looking earnestly in the lady’s face.

“ I do indeed,” said the lady; “ and will wait for you here.”

CHAPTER II.

Our best Helper—Respectable people—Dialogue—The mind’s mirror—The new resolve—Christ Jesus once a little boy—Coming to him for help.

DURING Reuben’s absence, the lady sat still upon the sofa, and tried to think what it would be best to say to the little boy. She felt glad that he was becoming as tired of himself as everybody was of him; but she doubted much whether she should be able to make him understand what he wanted, and how that want could be supplied. But just as Reuben came back with his clean face

and nicely smoothed hair, the lady remembered that the power of *doing* right, and of *teaching* the right, comes alike from God; so she left it all with him, determined to do herself what she could, and in the best way she could, for little Reuben.

Children, as well as grown people, should know that the great God is not far from any of us. We can *think* a prayer in a moment, or we can speak one in as short a time, which he will hear; and not only hear—for God *hears* everything—but will answer. When the Lord Jesus Christ lived in this wicked world, upon a certain time, a poor woman came to him, and prayed for her daughter. Her prayer was only three words long, “Lord, help me!” that was all. The Lord knew all

about her, and all about her daughter; and because she knew him as her only helper, her prayer was answered. Thus was it with the lady who talked with Reuben: we shall see this in the results; for we may be sure that the gift of doing good cometh down from the "Father of lights."

As Reuben passed the mirror a second time, he did not even turn his eye, so afraid was he of seeing that bad-looking boy again.

"I think you had better stop," said the lady, "and see if you don't like yourself better now. It is true that your eyes are red and swollen with crying; but your face is clean, and you are, on the whole, a respectable-looking little boy."

"What signifies being respect-

able," said Reuben, "if nobody wants me?"

The lady took Reuben's hand, and drew him close to her side: "My dear boy," said she, "if you are truly respectable, people *will* want you. The world can't get along without respectable people. But as that is rather a hard word, we will take another. The world wants *good* people, and cannot get along without them. Good people respect themselves; everybody respects them because they are *respectable*."

"But," said Reuben, "you said, just now, that my clean face and hands made me look quite respectable."

"That is true," replied the lady; we have a respect for cleanliness, but we don't want to limit our re-

spect to a boy's face and hands. Do you respect yourself for being clean?"

"I don't feel so much ashamed," said Reuben, "to look at you, now that my face is washed; but still I don't feel happy."

Lady. And would you feel happy if I were to leave the room?

Reuben. No, ma'am; I think not. I have never found that washing my face and hands, and combing my hair, has ever made a happy boy of me.

L. And do you know what would make you a happy boy?

R. Nothing, I think. It has always been so: nobody has ever wanted me; and I don't wonder now, since I have come not to want myself.

The lady thought a moment, and then said, "When I asked you to wash your hands and face did you think it a foolish request?"

"No, indeed," replied the little boy; "how could I, when they needed washing so much?"

L. And how did you know that?

R. Why, (and he could hardly help laughing,) I saw in the looking-glass that they were awful dirty.

L. And was it for this you were crying when I came in?

R. O, no; I knew that a little soap and water would make me clean: so it was not that.

L. What then?

R. I don't know, ma'am; I think it must have been that queer kind

of a feeling that I didn't want myself: I wished that there wasn't any Reuben, or else that—

L. Reuben was good?

R. I never really thought that I was bad until to-day: it might have been that.

L. No doubt, my dear, it was that. And now let me tell you that the mind has a looking-glass, and it is called *conscience*. It would be a very foolish thing for anybody to look at himself in one of our common mirrors, and then sit down and cry because he looked bad; especially if clean clothes, and soap and water, and a hair-brush, would make him look any better. But sometimes people look into the mind's mirror, and see what soap and water cannot make right; and if they don't

know what will, it is no great wonder if they cry. Tears are of no great use here, though we don't think them foolish. Now, Reuben, dear, when you looked into the glass to-day, and saw yourself a little, dirty, crying, disagreeable boy, that nobody wanted, the mind took a peep into its own mirror, and saw something still worse—saw that all the dislike of others was natural and just, and made you feel as if you didn't want yourself.

R. I am sure that what you say is all true; but it is a great pity that our minds have a looking-glass, if they must be always peeping in, and making us so unhappy and tired of ourselves.

L. Not at all, my dear boy. If it is proper that we should furnish our

houses with mirrors, that we may see when our persons are soiled and ill dressed, much more necessary is the mirror which God has given to the mind. We clothe and feed these bodies for the dust, Reuben; but we adorn the soul to live for ever with its God.

R. Yet what can we do? If the mind sees itself in its own looking-glass, not really dirty and ragged, but worse—I can't tell how—and soap and water, and hair-brushes, are of no use, what shall we do?

L. That is a very important inquiry, my dear; nor is it the first time that people, looking into the mind's mirror, have anxiously inquired, "What shall we do?" In the first place, Reuben, you must look again.

R. What! look at myself, when it makes me feel so bad?

L. Yes, dear; look at yourself until you see all that is there.

R. Then I am sure that I shall wish more than ever that there never had been a Reuben.

L. And why?

R. Why, in just taking a peep, I have seen such bad things—seen that I have never willingly obeyed my father and mother, which is one of God's commandments; have never kept the golden rule, nor that new commandment which says little children must love one another. O I don't like the mind's looking-glass! it makes me feel worse and worse. Pray, ma'am, did you ever look in?

L. Yes, dear; and when I first be-

gan to look, it made me feel just as it does you.

R. What! were *you* ever a little, dirty, crying, disagreeable boy—girl I mean—that nobody wanted?

L. Not exactly that; but I was once a vain, thoughtless girl; often indulging sinful passions, speaking wrong words, and thinking foolish thoughts: and when I looked into the mind's mirror I saw this.

R. And what did you do?

L. I sat down and cried, and didn't want myself.

R. How queer; just like me! but still you had to keep yourself, didn't you?

L. No, my dear; I should have been very miserable had I been obliged to keep that same wicked self. It was the same with me,

Reuben, as with you. I didn't like the mind's mirror: it made me feel worse and worse. But, somehow, when persons begin to see themselves in this mirror they can't help looking; but the more I looked, the worse I seemed to grow, till at last I was ready to die of grief and shame.

R. And what *did* you do?

L. I wondered if ever anybody were as wretched as myself. I had not a kind mother as you have, Reuben: my mother was in her grave; but she had left me a Bible. Well, dear, in my distress, and hating of myself, I took to reading this blessed book. There I found that nobody who is tired of a wicked heart need keep it.

R. But we *must*; it is ours, and what can we do?

L. That is the great trouble with most people, my dear little boy. They call their hearts their own, but they certainly have no right to them.

R. No right to our own hearts ! that is queer. I would like to know who has a right to them, if we have not.

L. Who made you, Reuben ?

R. God.

L. And who keeps you alive ?

R. God : I suppose that I couldn't live a moment without him.

L. You suppose rightly, my dear. And now tell me if it is right to disobey the great and good God who made and still preserves us.

R. No, ma'am ; it is wrong.

L. Well, Reuben, God says to every little boy, "Son, give me thy

heart." Now, dear, those persons who do not want themselves, who see that their hearts are not safe in their own keeping, ought to be very thankful for this command. I remember that this was the case with me, when I came to understand how it could be done, and felt so tired of myself, that I was willing to do anything that I might become good and happy.

R. But how can it be done? Everybody tells me that I ought to be good; but I can't. I have tried and tried, but I can't, ma'am, that is a fact.

L. I believe you, dear; and nobody who has looked into the mind's mirror expects a little boy to be good without help. It is of no use for us to try, dear, without we try aright;

but if we do try aright, we shall certainly succeed.

Reuben sat some time without speaking; he then asked the lady if it would not be best for him to go, first of all, to his mother, to tell her that he was at last tired of being a bad boy, and was now beginning, in good earnest, to be better.

“Have you ever done this?” asked the lady.

Reuben thought a moment, and then said that he had. “It is of no use,” continued he, sadly; “I have promised my mother a great many times that I would try to be better. Once I told her that I would be good for one day, and came out of her chamber thinking that I should; but before I was half way down stairs, I heard Becky say,

‘I hope it won’t rain to-day; if it does, we shall have Reuben at home, and I would as lief have a pestilence.’ Then Tom laughed, and I was angry. So I went into the kitchen, and called them all manner of names. Father heard me, and sent me to my own room: there I staid, and cried, and rolled on the floor, and beat my head against the wall, until dinner-time. In the afternoon I was sick, and had to go to bed; and at night I wouldn’t say my prayers, nor good night, to mother. Since then I have not promised to be good.”

“Well, my little boy,” said the lady, “you need not promise, but you can try—try in a new way which I will tell you. The Lord Jesus Christ was once a little boy

like you, but with this difference, he was not a sinful boy, for he had not a wicked heart: but Reuben, dear, he knew what sin was, and he knew what temptation meant, for he was tempted. He is able to succor those who are tempted—the Bible says so. Now, if Jesus had never been a little child, he might have known nothing about children's temptations. So he became a child, that in *all points*—that means, in every way in which people are tempted—he might know how to help them."

"It was very kind of him," said Reuben, wiping his eyes again. "I am sure that Jesus must have been a very good friend to little boys when he lived in this world."

"Ah yes, indeed!" said the lady; "none of us ever had a better friend.

But he is the same now: he loves little children as well as he ever did."

"You mean *good* children," said Reuben.

"Yes," replied the lady, "and naughty ones too, or he would not try by his Spirit to make them good, that they might be fit to come and live with him; and you may be sure, my dear boy, that when he sees persons that don't want themselves because they are wicked, he is pleased, and all ready to help them."

"And *will* he help them? will he help *me*?" asked Reuben, earnestly.

"If we want his help enough to ask for it," said the lady: "if we feel, as the Bible says, that 'without him we can do nothing,' and believe that

he is able and willing to do all for us that we need—all that we pray for—then he will help us."

"Then," said Reuben, "instead of going to my mother, and telling her that I mean to be good, I must go to the Lord Jesus Christ, and ask him to help me, when I try."

"Yes, dear," and the lady folded Reuben in her arms, and tenderly kissed his cheek.

The little boy did not venture to promise anything. He felt as all persons feel when they come to see themselves in the mind's mirror, very, very weak. So, when the lady bid him good morning, and was about leaving the room, Reuben caught her hand again, and asked her if she would help him.

"My dear little boy," said the lady,

“there is but One that can help you ; don’t you understand ?”

“Yes, yes,” replied Reuben ; “I don’t mean help me to be good, but help me to come to Jesus Christ.”

“You mean to ask me if I will pray for you, don’t you ?” said the lady.

“Yes, ma’am, pray for me, that is what I mean,” said the little boy.

The lady was now sure that Reuben understood what she had been saying to him ; and kissing his cheek again, she promised not to forget his request.

CHAPTER III.

The family party—Unkind words—Adam—Reuben talks with father—Look steadily at the mind's mirror.

SEVERAL days passed away before any one appeared to notice the change in Reuben. His mother saw it first, but she said nothing, for she feared it would not last. The lady watched him with some anxiety, and it cannot be supposed that she had no fears for a passionate little boy like him. She felt very much encouraged, however, when Reuben told her that he prayed often, and believed that Jesus Christ was willing to help him.

Several weeks had now passed away, when one evening Frank and Helen were playing at jack-straws.

Mr. Ramsay was reading, Mrs. Ramsay was sitting with the lady at her work, and the baby, who had become very fond of Reuben, was laughing to see him roll the playthings. Presently there were whispers which sounded very much like dispute. The sound came from the table where Frank and Helen were playing jack-straws. Mr. Ramsay did not notice it at first; but Frank, getting very angry, called out, in a loud, harsh voice, "You jogged, miss! and there is no use in denying it."

"What is all this?" said the father, looking sternly over his book. "Frank! Helen! leave the room!"

Frank rudely shoved back his chair, his face crimson with shame and anger, and left the room. Helen

burst into tears, and disappeared at another door.

“I am surprised,” said Mrs. Ramsay: “it is quite uncommon for Frank and Helen to behave in this way!”

“It seems,” replied the father, carelessly, “that they have some of ‘old Adam,’ after all.”

Reuben sighed, and said that he was sorry.

“You sorry!” said his father, laughing; “are you not willing that Frank and Helen should share ‘old Adam’ with you?”

Little Reuben felt grieved, and, in spite of himself, the tears came to his eyes. His mother saw them, and said, “Father has forgotten that Reuben is getting to be a good boy.”

“ Ah !” said Mr. Ramsay, “ and so I had. Come here, Reuben, and tell me why you are sorry for Frank and Helen.”

Reuben climbed upon his father’s knee, and told him how he had read a great deal in his Testament lately ; and how the Testament said, that in *Adam* all die.

Mr. Ramsay was much surprised ; but the tears came to the mother’s eyes as she asked her little boy what that meant.

“ I think it means,” said Reuben, “ that Adam sinned against God, and then had a wicked heart. All of us have wicked hearts, and I suppose that is what father means by having ‘old Adam.’ If we don’t get tired of these, and come to Christ, all that is good will die out of our hearts, and

we shall be very wicked. I always thought that Frank and Helen were good, but now I am afraid that they are not: they ought to see themselves in the mind's mirror."

"And what is that?" asked his father.

The little boy wondered that his father did not know, and asked him if he had never seen himself in that mirror.

"Perhaps so," replied Mr. Ramsay; "but I have forgotten it."

"Then, dear papa," said Reuben, "you never looked in. Nobody could forget that."

His father laughed, and said perhaps everybody did not see so frightful a looking creature as his little boy did. "You see, my son," continued Mr. Ramsay, "I have always meant

to be a decent-looking person: even when I was a little boy I took care that my face and hands should be clean, my hair brushed, and all that; so that if I happened to look into the glass I need not be frightened at myself. As for the *mind's looking-glass*, I must confess that I have taken but few peeps there, and, on the whole, they have been very satisfactory."

"Your father, my son," said Mrs. Ramsay, "has never, knowingly, wronged any man. He was a tolerably good-natured boy, and has grown up to be a very respectable man. The mind's looking-glass must be a great magnifier, if it can make a very bad image from a mind like that."

"Well," said Reuben, "I am but

a little boy, and I can't talk very well about such things; but I would like to know, papa, if you have all this time kept your own heart, and kept so good too."

"Kept it myself, dear!" said his father; "certainly, why not?"

Reuben thought a moment, and then said, "You know that God tells us to give *him* our hearts; and I thought it was because we couldn't keep them good *ourselves*."

Mr. Ramsay made no reply to this. One glance into the mind's mirror told him very plainly, that however good he might be, he had never kept that commandment. If he had looked a little longer, he would have seen that by breaking this first, great commandment, he had broken all; and that in his

heart, of which he had boasted so much, dwelt no good thing. It will not do for people to take only *sidelong* glances at the mind's mirror. They must stand before it, as Reuben did, until they see what is there. If they do this, they will feel, as he did, that they do not want themselves.

CHAPTER IV.

The return—Death's doings—Happy meeting—Christian influence—Christ our Comforter.

YEARS passed away, and the lady who had taught Reuben about the mind's mirror again visited Mrs. Ramsay. The family were in great affliction. Frank, who had grown to be a fine, promising young man, and had for two years been engaged

in a thriving business in the city, came home sick, and died suddenly. Helen was almost heart-broken for the loss of her dear brother. She had grown up to be a very beautiful and rather a vain young lady. She had promised herself many happy days in the city with her brother Frank; but he was gone—gone down in his youth to the grave.

Mrs. Ramsay had long believed in Jesus as the resurrection and the life, and she hoped that Frank believed in him too; and the Bible says, “He that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live:” so Mrs. Ramsay did not mourn for Frank as Helen did.

“But where,” said the lady, “is Mr. Ramsay and Reuben?”

“Ah!” replied the mother, throw-

ing her arms around the neck of her friend, "what a blessing was your last visit to us! That dear boy has been the means of bringing his father to Christ. I do not know what we should do in this sad hour, if it were not for this."

Reuben soon came in—a tall, fine-looking boy—and you may be sure he remembered the lady without an introduction. Children know how well they love those who have been patient with their faults, and taught them the way to be good; so I need not tell them how affectionately Reuben pressed the hand of his friend, and could hardly leave her side for a single moment during the evening. A happy evening was that to all but poor Helen. God had sent this deep affliction upon her,

that she might turn her heart from earth to him—so said her father—so said they all. And they told Helen, too, how Jesus invited the weary and heavy laden to himself. Helen said that she was not fit to come. Then Reuben smiled joyfully, and whispered to the lady, that Helen was looking at herself in the “mind’s mirror.” He felt sure that when she had seen all her heart there, she would be glad to look to Jesus. And so it was.

DIALOGUE.

FATHER, MOTHER, AND THE CHILDREN.

FATHER.

The drifted snows of winter
On hill and valley lie,
And now the shades of evening
Are gathering o'er the sky.
How many wander homeless !
How many food require !
While we, in peace and plenty,
Surround our evening fire.

MOTHER.

And what are we, my children,
That peace and health are ours,
While many, sick and joyless,
Count o'er the weary hours ?
Come, let us spend this evening,
With hearts attuned to praise ;
While each in turn shall tell us
A tale of Bible days.

HENRY.

There was a wicked monarch,
 Who made, of solid gold,
 An idol god to worship,
 And all the people told,
 That when the sound of music
 Rose high and merrily,
 Before the golden idol
 They all must bow the knee.

And at the time appointed,
 When music fill'd the air,
 The people all assembled,
 And bow'd as if in prayer:
 All but three pious Hebrews,
 Who heard the king's commands,
 But dared not bow and worship
 An idol made with hands.

They knew a fiery furnace
 Awaited all who dared
 To disobey this mandate,
 Yet not for this they cared :
 The judgments of Jehovah,
 More awful far to them,
 Than all the wrath and fury
 Of fierce and cruel men.

They knew their God was faithful,
 They trusted in his care,
 And staid their hearts upon him,
 In faith and fervent prayer.
 And when the fiery furnace
 Roll'd up its scorching flame,
 They knew in whom they trusted,
 And bless'd his holy name.

With unrelenting anger,
 The king their sentence pass'd,
 And in that blazing furnace
 The pious Hebrews cast.
 But, radiant as the morning,
 A Form before them stood—
 The king, o'erwhelm'd with terror,
 Beheld the Son of God !

He trod the fiery furnace,
 He spread a covering there,
 And from their heads, thus shielded,
 There perish'd not a hair.
 The king then wrote an edict,
 And sent it all abroad,
 That men of every nation
 Should trust the Hebrews' God,

FATHER.

Dare to do right, my children,
 Though *death* is in the way ;
 God saves, with great salvation,
 All who will trust and pray.
 And though all needful honor
 To *rulers* must be paid,
 Remember, *God's* commandments
 Must not be disobey'd.

CHARLES.

When Israel return'd again,
 Those that were captive led,
 There rose a mighty famine,
 A scarcity of bread ;
 And many thence departed,
 And sought to save their life ;
 Among the rest, Elimelech,
 And Naomi, his wife.

The fruitful plain of Moab
 Lay green along their way,
 And, hungry, faint, and weary,
 They here resolved to stay ;
 Here, in a land of strangers,
 To dwell, at last removed
 From native home so precious,
 From kindred well beloved.

But ah! the home of sorrow
 Is still upon the earth;
 We know not what the morrow,
 For us, is bringing forth.
 Thus was it with Naomi,
 Torn from her native land—
 But ah! a grief more bitter
 Was waiting close at hand.

The husband, and the father,
 Down to the grave was borne—
 The mother, and the children,
 Were left alone to mourn:
 Alone, but not forsaken—
 Our God is everywhere,
 “A Father to the fatherless,”
 “A God that heareth prayer.”

In Him the mother trusted,
 Her sure protector then;
 And, in the land of strangers,
 Her boys grew up to men,
 Her earthly hope and solace,
 The comfort of her life:
 Each took, of Moab’s daughters,
 A fair and gentle wife.

But ah! the cruel spoiler,
 All earthly hopes deride—
 The sons are laid in silence,
 Close to their father's side.
 And now the lonely mother,
 Sorrowing, and sore bereft,
 Thinks of the home and kindred,
 That long ago she left.

The graves, so dearly cherish'd,
 Received her parting tear,
 And then, in silent anguish,
 Commenc'd her journey drear.
 She bade adieu to *Orpah*—
 But *Ruth* still press'd her hand;
 “ Go back,” said she, “ my daughter,
 Back to thy native land.”

“ No, mother; if I leave thee,”
 The weeping one replied,
 “ May I be thus forsaken
 When all my friends have died.
 Entreat me not, my mother,
 But grant me this, I pray,
 To gladden, with my presence,
 Thy long and weary way.

“ My willing feet shall wander
 Where’er thy steps have trod;
 Thy people be my people,
 Thy God shall be my God.
 Make for thyself an altar,
 There will I bow the knee—
 And where thy grave is planted,
 There shall they bury me.”

And thus, with tearful gladness,
 They both pursued their way;
 God pointing with his finger,
 Their journey, day by day:
 Till in her native country
 Naomi stood once more;
 But now at home a stranger,
 Both portionless and poor.

The Hand that feeds the ravens
 Will no good thing deny,
 To those who walk uprightly,
 And on His word rely.
 The fruitful fields of Boaz
 Supplied them both with food;
 And Ruth became the partner
 Of one both rich and good.

MOTHER.

Be sympathizing, children;
 Our blessed Lord was so;
 He spent his life relieving
 The hearts oppress'd with woe:
 This was our Saviour's mission,
 To grant the poor relief,
 For sorrow's sake, becoming
 Himself a man of grief.

You see how God rewarded
 The kind and gentle Ruth;
 He loved her tender spirit,
 Her constancy and truth:
 He gave her home and kindred,
 And human hearts to love,
 And—better far—he doubtless
 Gave her a home above.

SUSAN.

Elisha came to Bethel,
 An old and hoary man;
 A troop of wicked children
 From out the city ran:
 And while the aged prophet
 Pass'd on, with footsteps slow,
 These wicked children shouted,
 "Go up, thou bald head, go!"

They knew that good Elijah
 Had gone in glory up,
 Borne, in a flaming chariot,
 From Carmel's lofty top :
 And yet, with bitter scorning,
 They dared the man deride,
 On whom Elijah's mantle
 Should evermore abide.

God saw these wicked children,
 And heard their language rude,
 And call'd two raging monsters
 From out the darksome wood :
 Here they were torn in pieces,
 None heard their cries of woe,
 Who bade Jehovah's prophet,
 " Go up, thou bald head, go ! "

FATHER.

Children, beware of mocking
 The aged and the good,
 For God will surely punish
 All such behavior rude.
 Be courteous and obliging ;
 If *youth* your kindness shares,
 You will not be forgetful
 To honor hoary hairs.

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

A MOTHER AND HER CHILDREN.

MOTHER.

COME, children, your mother is waiting for you,
Come one, come all, and now tell me true,
In the various places where you have been,
The prettiest sight that you ever have seen.

JOHNNY.

Why, mother, I think the most beautiful sight
Are the *soldiers*, all clad in their armor so bright—
The tall, waving plume, and the gay epaulet,
Is the prettiest sight I have ever seen yet.

SAMMY.

They look well enough, brother Johnny, but I
Saw a prettier sight on the Fourth of July—

"Twas the circus-men riding their horses of gray,—
No soldiers were ever so pretty as they.

SUSAN.

Dear mother, *I* think the most beautiful sight
Is the pure silver moon on a clear summer's night—
With a host of bright stars, like the train of a queen;
"Tis the prettiest sight that I ever have seen.

RALPH.

I like the high mountain that kisses the sky,
Where the eagle looks down with his dark, piercing
eye;
And I love the broad river, and cataract's roar,
And the waves that roll up on the smooth sandy
shore.

BESSY.

I went with two cents to buy dolly a dress—
And what think I saw? I know you can 't guess—
"Twas a *red sugar horse!* such a beautiful one,
That I bought it, and ate it, so now it is gone.

KATY.

Well, mother, *I* think the most beautiful things
Are the dear little birds, with their soft shining wings,

When they sing on the trees, and the branches are
green,

"Tis the prettiest sight that I ever have seen.

MARY.

I too love the notes of the dear little bird—
But they're not the sweetest I ever have heard:
I am glad when they come to the tall green trees;
But I think there are prettier sights than these.

On a sweet sabbath morning, so balmy and cool,
To see children come to our own sabbath school—
So constant, as never a lesson to miss—
I know of no prettier sight than this.

ALL.

Now mother, dear mother, wherever you 've been,
Pray tell us the prettiest sight you have seen.

MOTHER.

Well, children, your mother loves not to behold
The soldier's bright armor, that glitters like gold,
For she thinks of the holy commandment of God
That long since forbade us to shed human blood.

And the poor circus-horses, I often have been
Where there are far prettier sights to be seen ;
But of one thing I'm sure—if those horses could speak,
We should find them ashamed of the company they
keep.

I think, with dear Susan, the moon in the sky,
On a clear summer's night, presents to the eye
A beautiful picture, displaying abroad
The wonderful goodness and glory of God.

And Ralph, my dear son, in the cataract's roar,
And the waves that roll up on the smooth sandy
shore,
We see the great power of Him, in whose eye
Not even a sparrow unnoticed shall die.

And what shall I say to my dear little Bess,
Who, spending her money, robb'd doll of a dress ?
I think she has learn'd the good lesson to-day,
That red sugar horses soon gallop away.

Yes, Katy, the birds, with their soft shining wings,
Are among our Creator's most glorious things—
They sing to his praise on the green waving trees ;
Let the children unite in anthems like these.

But, children, your dear sister Mary is right,—
Mother never has seen a more beautiful sight,
On the sea or the sky—in the field or the wood,
Than a circle of children all happy and good.



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